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REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE  
RURAL DISTRICT  
OF  
MERE AND TISBURY

For the Year ended 31st December,  
1946.

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SANITARY AND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

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# **Annual Report**

for the year ended December, 1946,  
on Public Health Matters in the  
Mere and Tisbury Rural District.

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## **SECTION A.**

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### **General Description of the District.**

This district is mainly an agricultural one lying in the south west of Wiltshire, and comprises, as well as good farm land, large areas of downland with few and scattered houses. The population, some 10,800, are for the most part engaged in agriculture or in trades related thereto. There are no large scale factories or works in the district. Besides the numerous villages there are two small towns, one in each district, viz. Mere and Tisbury. These two towns have piped water supply and water carriage sewage schemes, and other modern amenities. While a piped water supply for the district as a whole is a distinct possibility in the future, from a revenue producing standpoint the sewerage of large tracts of waste or semi-waste ground is a different matter. However, it may be possible by satisfactory grouping of adjacent villages to serve at least some additional villages, but for this to materialise a substantial grant would be necessary.

The following figures give additional information about the district :—

Area : 71,319 acres.  
Population : 10,880.

Rateable Value : £47,409.

Penny Rate yields : £197 10s. 9d.

Number of Inhabited Houses : 3,313.

Number of Houses Built in 1946 :

1. By Private Enterprise : 4.

2. By Local Authority : 8.

Number of buildings, etc., converted to dwelling houses :

1. By Private Enterprise : 13.

2. By Local Authority : 41.

## Vital Statistics to December, 1946.

### *Births.*

One hundred and eighty three children were born in the district, of whom one hundred and eleven were male and seventy two were female.

There were thirteen illegitimate births. The birth-rate was 16·8, a very satisfactory figure.

#### Particulars of births.

Live Births—	Total	M	F	} Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 16·8.
Legitimate	170	104	66	
Illegitimate	13	7	6	
Stillbirths—				} Rate per 1,000 births 26.
Legitimate	5	2	3	
Illegitimate	0	0	0	

### *Deaths.*

There were one hundred and forty seven deaths, of whom seventy nine were male and sixty eight were female. The death rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population was 13·4.

### *Particulars of Deaths.*

There were no deaths from puerperal causes.

#### Deaths under one year of age.

There were nine deaths of infants under one year of age, giving the following death rates :—

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	49
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births		20
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births		38·4

## Deaths from infectious diseases.

Measles all ages	...	...	0
Whooping cough all ages	...	...	0
Diarrhoea under two years	...	...	0
Pneumonia	...	...	4
Influenza	...	...	1
Tuberculosis (all forms)	..	...	2

There were no deaths from scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid, cerebro-spinal fever, smallpox or other infectious disease.

## Other causes of death.

Cancer	...	...	17
Diabetes	..	...	2
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	20
Heart and other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	53
Bronchitis	...	...	7
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	3
Digestive Diseases	...	...	8
Nephritis	...	...	11
Premature births and congenital malformations			5
Violent causes	...	...	2
Other causes	...	...	12
Total			147

*General Statement on the Health of the District during 1946.*

The birth rate for 1946 slightly exceeded that of 1945, which was also a satisfactory rate.

The death rate decreased from the 1945 figure of 14·8 to a more satisfactory figure of 13·4.

During the year there was no epidemic of infectious disease and not a single confirmed case of diphtheria. As will be seen from the above figures there was no excessive or unusual cause of mortality.



Deaths were mostly such as occur in elderly people. There were no deaths from ordinary notifiable disease, and only two from all forms of tuberculosis. The maternal mortality was nil.

The number of cases of infectious disease was under the average.

## SECTION B.

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### **General Provision of Health Services for the Area.**

#### *Public Health Staff.*

##### MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

G. NAPIER. Bachelor of Science (with Honours); Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery; Diploma of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, England; Certificate of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, London; etc.

The Medical Officer of Health devotes the whole of his time to Public Health work, and is also Medical Officer to the Wilton Borough Council and the Salisbury and Wilton R.D.C.

##### SANITARY INSPECTOR.

T. A. BROWN (MAJOR) (Senior Inspector). Associate of the Royal Sanitary Institute. Certificates :— Royal Sanitary Institute and Sanitary Inspectors' Joint Board Exam. (Sanitary Inspector); Royal Sanitary Institute (Inspector of Meat and other foods).

The Sanitary Inspector holds the appointment (inter-alia) of Surveyor and Petroleum Officer.

## **Nursing.**

There are Nursing Associations throughout the district supported by Local Nursing Associations. These work well and there has been little to find fault with in this service during the year. The nurses undertake home nursing and maternity cases.

## **Laboratory Facilities.**

Examination of swabs from suspected cases of diphtheria, and samples of water etc., are despatched to Salisbury Infirmary Laboratory for analysis and report. The service given is prompt and efficient.

## **Hospital Service available for the Area.**

- (1) *Infectious Fevers.* Joint Districts Isolation Hospital, Old Sarum
- (2) *General Cases.* General Infirmary, Salisbury.
- (3) *Children.* Various Homes under supervision of the County Council.
- (4) *Maternity.* Beds are available at Salisbury Infirmary.
- (5) *Venereal Disease.* Salisbury Infirmary Clinic.
- (6) *Tuberculosis.* Winsley Sanatorium and Harnwood Hospital take the majority of cases ; beds are also to be had through the County Council at Savernake and at Alton, or at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (7) *Chronic Sick.* Provision is arranged for these cases.
- (8) *Orthopædic.* Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (9) *Mental Cases.* Special schools outside the County, or other County Institutions through the County Council, e.g , Pewsey Colony.

(10) { *Puerperal Fever*  
*Puerperal Pyrexia*  
*Ophthalmia Neonatorum* } Arrangements are made  
and consultations offered  
by the County Council

(11) *Ear, Nose and Throat cases.* Salisbury Infirmary

### ***Hospital Service as a Whole.***

There are no Council hospitals in the Area itself, and none are necessary, the present arrangements being satisfactory and the area well served. Full advantage is taken of Hospital treatment.

Salisbury Infirmary is equipped to deal with operative surgical cases and maternity cases, has special departments for all specialised work, and contains an up-to-date pathological laboratory.

### ***Clinics and Treatment Centres.***

(1) *Infant Welfare.* Centres are provided by a committee of ladies supported by voluntary contributions, by the payment of a small fee, and by a subsidy. Antenatal work is also carried out.

(2) *Other Clinics.* There are in Salisbury available for and used by this district a Tuberculosis Dispensary, Venereal Diseases Clinic, and an Orthopædic Centre, provided by the County Council.

There is no school clinic for the District, neither are there day nurseries or light clinics.

### ***Transport—Ambulance Facilities.***

(1) *Infectious cases.* Joint Districts Isolation Hospital Ambulance.

(2) *Non-infectious and accident cases, etc.* Salisbury Fire Brigade have an ambulance which is hired. An arrangement has been made with the St. John Ambulance Association to deal with transport of cases of general illness.



## SECTION C.

### **Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**

#### *Main Drainage.*

One length of sewer to take the drainage from the Council House site at Mere was installed during the year. Otherwise the description given of the main drainage in the report for 1945 still applies.

The Analyst's report of the effluent from the outfall at at Mere, Hindon and Tisbury sewage works was not satisfactory. The Council have engaged the services of a Consulting Engineer to carry out a detailed survey with a view to effecting improvements to the above-mentioned sewage works. A complete report of the survey is not yet to hand.

A proposal has been made to vest the Milton Sewer at East Knoyle in the local authority, and the handing over is now nearing completion.

#### *House Drainage.*

Eight septic tanks were constructed to private houses. No statutory action was necessary to have private tanks or cesspools emptied.

#### *Public Cleansing.*

(1) SCAVENGING. A comprehensive scheme for the collection and disposal of refuse was inaugurated on the 1st July, 1946. Household refuse is now collected from each parish monthly.

The results of this new scheme will ultimately do away with the many unsightly dumps which are scattered over various parts of the district. It will also have an effect in combating the rat menace.

(2) SALVAGE. As voluntary collection of salvage has now ceased it has been found necessary to have an organised collection of salvage every month, which is carried out at the same time as the refuse collection. The results

of the collections for 1946 are set out in the following table :—

Mixed Paper	...	...	28 tons
Rags	...	...	2 tons.
Bones	...	...	1 ton.
Metal	...	...	10 tons.

- (3) VERMINOUS PREMISES. Three houses were found to be infested with fleas and were disinfected.

No infestation of bed bugs was found.

- (4) RAT AND MICE DESTRUCTION. Arrangements are made with the Wiltshire Agricultural Executive Committee for their Pests Destruction Staff to deal with infestations in the district which normally fall to the Council for attention under the Rats and Mice Destruction Act. Two marked infestations to a block of property at Mere and Tisbury were referred to the W.A.E.C., the costs of the operation being recovered from the individual occupiers.

### *Smoke Abatement.*

There were no nuisances requiring statutory action.

### *Sanitation of Special Premises.*

- (1) SCHOOLS. Improvements to the drainage system at Semley school were carried out during the year. A proposal has been put forward to effect various improvements to the Hindon school. Representations have been made to the Wiltshire County Council with a view to having this school removed from its present site owing to its unsatisfactory position.

The premises are situated close to the Hindon sewage works and the yard is subject to flooding during abnormal weather conditions.

It was found necessary to close this school for three weeks. owing to cases of scarlet fever in the Infants' department.

Improvements have also been carried out to two private establishments.

- (2) **SHOPS.** No statutory action was necessary, but in one case sanitary accommodation was provided for the staff.
- (3) **PUBLIC HOUSES AND HOTELS.** New sanitary accommodation was installed at one public house.
- (4) **FOOD PREPARING PREMISES.** Bakehouses were visited and the usual lime-washing carried out, on informal action being taken. One new bakehouse was erected in lieu of one condemned

No ice-cream was manufactured in the District but a number of retail premises are registered. These retailers stock wrapped ice-cream obtained from manufacturers who specialise in this commodity.

### *Water Supply.*

**PUBLIC.** The general descriptions of the water supplies of the District are the same as reported last year. The Council's comprehensive scheme has not yet been put into operation.

There has been no occasion to report under Article 27 (3).

The Waterworks Manager takes samples regularly under this heading, and takes any action necessary to maintain pure supplies.

Chemical Analysis of the Council's Public Supplies were taken at Tisbury, Mere, Donhead and Teffont.

The following data dealing with Bacteriological samples is submitted in accordance with Circular 28/46, Ministry of Health.

- I (a) The quality of the water depends generally on the source. Much of the water in the district is derived from the chalk and is of excellent quality. The quality of water from the numerous shallow wells varies considerably.
- (b) There are ample quantities of water available, except in those districts where shallow well or rainfall supplies may cease during drought,



2. Results of public supply analyses are given in the attached table.
3. The water supplied by the Council is alkaline and has no plumbo-solvent properties.
4. Chlorination is carried out to all public services except Teffont.
5. Number of houses supplied.                      Population served
 

Direct	...	1697	...	5788 approx.
By Standpipe		82	...	328 approx.

Source	Date	Total Colonies on agar at 37°C per 1 m.l water	Coli Aerogenes per 100 m.l. water	Fæcal type B. Coli per 100 m.l water
Donhead	25-1-46	—	—	—
Donhead	6-5-46	33	5	—
Donhead	27-8-46	3	5	—
Donhead	20-12-46	10	—	—
Mere	18-1-46	4	30	—
Mere	2-5-46	3	—	—
Mere	24-8-46	—	—	—
Mere	20-12-46	1	—	—
Teffont	18-1-46	1	3	—
Teffont	3-5-46	2	—	—
Teffont	29-8-46	2	3	—
Teffont	20-12-46	1	—	—
Tisbury	25-1-46	2	—	—
Tisbury	11-2-46	3	14	—
Tisbury	2-5-46	15	50	13
Tisbury	13-5-46	10	14	—
Tisbury	24-5-46	4	11	—
Tisbury	24-8-46	4	—	—
Tisbury	30-8-46	—	3	—
Tisbury	20-12-46	2	—	—

PRIVATE. Five samples were taken from private sources, and only one sample from a well was found to be dangerously polluted. Action has been taken and this matter rectified.



## *Meat and Other Foods.*

(1) MEAT. Centralised slaughtering at Salisbury has been continued, and all home killed carcasses have been inspected before entering the area.

Regular visits are made to butchers' premises. No butcher's meat was condemned on account of tuberculosis.

The following was condemned as unfit for human consumption:—

Mutton	...	112 lbs
Beef	...	26 lbs
Suet	...	4 lbs
Rolled Oats		84 lbs
Prunes	...	100 lbs
Spaghetti	...	50 lbs
Dates	...	139 lbs

### *Canned Goods.*

Meat, Fish, Vegetables	157 lbs
Other Foods	82 lbs

All the foregoing were voluntarily surrendered at the time of inspection and no proceedings were taken.

## *Milk and Dairies.*

Total number of Dairymen registered at December 31st, 1946, and in operation (including producers, producer retailers and retailers)	...	...	324
Number of retailers	...	...	75
Number of separate farms or dairies	...	...	337
Number of new dairies added in 1946	...	...	2
Number of reconstructions in 1946	...	...	10
Number of dairymen removed from the register or suspended by the Council	..	...	nil
Number of registrations lapsing owing to change of occupation	...	...	10
Number of new registrations arising from change of occupation or new premises	...	...	9

Number of notices served (verbal or written)	...	11
Number of notices complied with	...	11
Number of outstanding notices	..	nil
Total number of inspections made	...	318
Number of licences in force (pasteurised)	...	1

### *Slaughter of Animals.*

Number of renewals of licences issued to slaughtermen under the 1933 Act	...	11
Number of new licences issued	...	1
No legal proceedings were taken.		

### *Housing.*

Total number of houses inspected under the Housing or Public Health Acts	...	50
Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	82
Number of informal notices served	...	20
Number of notices complied with	...	18
Number of notices outstanding	...	2
Number of statutory notices served	...	2
Number of statutory notices complied with	...	2

During the past year there has been no important change in the housing situation, and the systematic inspections made under the Housing Consol. Regs. have been few in number. The situation has been rendered more difficult by the inability of the Council to fill the position of Additional Sanitary Inspector, which has been vacant since 1st September, 1946.

The Civil Building Control continues to take up a great deal of the Sanitary Inspector's time, and with labour and materials being scarce, the repairs to existing houses will necessarily have to be controlled. It is hoped to make a start with a detailed housing survey as soon as the necessary staff has been obtained.

### Factories.

Number of factories on register at end of 1946 ... 45

Number of inspections made:—

1—Factories with power ... 34

2—Factories without power ... 12

Extensions to two factories were completed during the year.

It was not necessary to take statutory action.

### Infectious Diseases.

	No. Notified.	Removed to Hospital		
Scarlet Fever	16	...	...	16
Diphtheria	0	...	...	0
Pneumonia	5	...	...	0
Malaria	1	...	...	1
Erysipelas	6	...	...	0
Erythema Nodosum	1	...	...	1

In addition to the above there were the usual minor seasonal outbreaks of measles, mumps and whooping cough ; fortunately none of these required hospital attention and there were no deaths.

Table showing the extent of immunisation against diphtheria reached in Mere and Tisbury District on December 12th, 1946.

Age at 31.12.46	Under							Total under
	1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	15
Born in year	1946	'45	'44	'43	'42	'37	'32	
No. Immunised		83	113	112	148	669	659	1782
Estimated mid-year population 1946				855		1490		2345

N.B.—The above table shows that some 75% of the Mere and Tisbury children are immunised. While it is hoped this figure may be still better in later years, it is at present reasonably satisfactory.

*Summary of all inspections.*

Complaints (Public Health)	...	...	110
Water Supply	...	...	32
Food Premises	...	...	76
Farms, Dairies	...	...	318
Infectious Disease	...	...	26
Rats and Mice Destruction Act	...	...	55
Factories	...	...	46
Housing	...	...	82
Other Public Health matters	...	...	232
Council House Repairs...	...	...	140
Miscellaneous	...	...	123
Total			1240

*Rag Flock Act.*

There are no registered rag flock dealers, marine store dealers or common lodging house keepers.

*Out-workers' Premises.*

Number on register—8.

Work—Glove making.

Defects found—nil.

G. NAPIER.









